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Features

19 2015 BUILDER'S CHOICE & CUSTOM HOME DESIGN AWARDS

The winning projects of this year's design awards prove that paying attention to thoughtful details matters. Our jury members took notice, and the architects and builders whose work is represented on the following pages share a commitment to craft that is worth celebrating.

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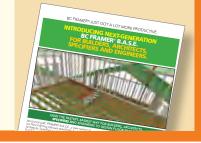
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These savvy spaces, from Custom Home's online Project Gallery, made us look twice. We're always in search of great projects and invite you to add your best work at customhomeonline.com/project-gallery.





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Landscape Architect Robin Key Landscape
Architecture, New York; General Contractor
Kenneth E. Larson Construction, West
Islip, N.Y.; Photography Daniel Levin, Jimi
Billingsley, Francine Fleischer

SEA RANCH RESIDENCE, SEA RANCH, CALIF.

Architect Turnbull Griffin Haesloop Architects, San Francisco; Landscape Architect Joni L. Janecki & Associates, Santa Cruz, Calif.; General Contractor Matheny Construction, Nevada City, Calif.; Photography David Wakely





SANTA FE RESIDENCE, SANTA FE, N.M.

Architect Ohlhausen DuBois Architects, New York; Builder Wolf Corp., Santa Fe; Landscape Architect Paula Hayes and Charles Pearson; Photography Frank Oudeman

CAMBRIDGE HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Architect Anmahian Winton Architects, Cambridge, Mass.; Landscape Architect Matthew Cunningham Landscape Design, Winchester, Mass.; General Contractor Sea-Dar Construction, Boston; Photography Jane Messinger

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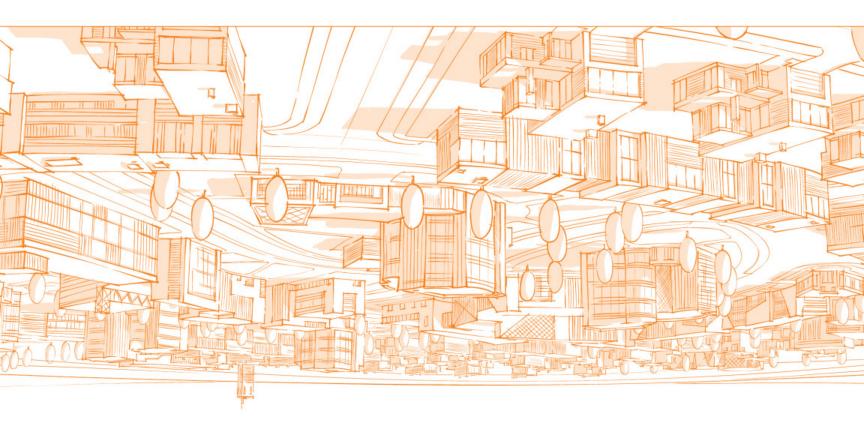
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Builder's Choice & Custom Home 2015

DESIGN AWARDS

Builder's Choice Custom Home

Design Awards

Custom houses are all about the details, big and small. Our jury—which included Jeffrey Day of Omaha, Neb.- and San Francisco-based Min|Day; Drew Lang of New York-based Lang Architecture; and Ray Varela of San Diego-based Carrier Johnson—responded most to the projects that took a thoughtful approach to those details. The winners of this year's Builder's Choice & Custom Home Design Awards, featured on the following pages, get them all right. Whether it's using custom milled siding to minimize visible hardware on a hillside site in Austin, Texas, navigating difficult view lines in a retreat on Penobscot Bay, Maine, or filtering daylight to brighten a formerly dark interior in a renovation in San Francisco, the architects and builders represented here share a commitment to craft that is worth celebrating. It's what makes these projects not only simple exercises in design, but also perfectly tailored homes for their clients.

By Katie Gerfen, Edward Keegan, and Leah Demirjian

ADDITIONAL WINNERS CAN BE SEEN IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF BUILDER.
FOR MORE IMAGES AND PROJECT INFORMATION, VISIT
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Lake View Residence

ocated on a hillside in Austin, Texas, the Lake View Residence by local firm Alterstudio Architecture is sandwiched between a grove of mature live oak trees and a view of the nearby 200-acre Bright Leaf Preserve. Floor-to-ceiling glazing in the open-plan house captures a vista of the protected wildlife area, and thanks to the structure's thin profile (it's only one room deep in most areas), those same spaces also overlook the trees at the front of the wedge-shaped property.

The entrance is tucked behind a curved enclosure clad in 2x6 and 2x2 cedar boards,



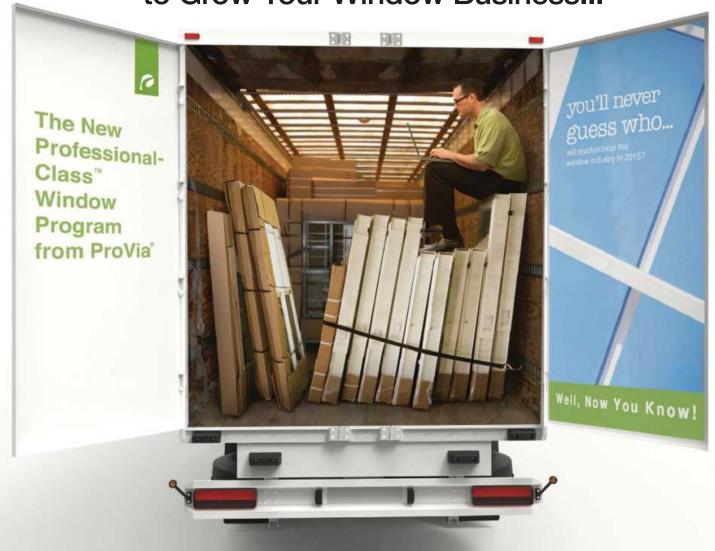




Project Lake View Residence, Austin, Texas; **Entrant/Architect** Alterstudio Architecture, Austin; **Builder** Wilmington-Gordon, Austin; **Project Size** 5,195 square feet; **Site** 1.3 acres; **Photography** Casey Dunn



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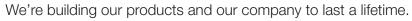






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More Than 5,000 Square Feet Merit Award

Mill Springs Ranch

his sprawling four-structure estate on 6 acres in South Central Texas highlights many of the topographic advantages of the Hill Country region. The house sits at the water's edge beside a 50-year-old dam where two streams meet. The four buildings, composed of locally quarried limestone and contrasting steel-and-glass walls, surround a courtyard that's protected from the sun by mature pecan and cypress trees that the architects carefully wove into the compound. Individual spaces open to the valley landscape, providing a wide variety of experiences intimately linked to the site.

Operable walls, coupled with inherently sustainable siting strategies, mean that rooms unfold as a continuous series of open spaces. The ranch typically uses only natural ventilation except in extreme conditions, when a geothermal HVAC system is used. — *E.K.*

"It's a wonderful space, and I think the landscape is integrated really, really well with the architecture." — juror Ray Varela



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More Than 5,000 Square Feet Merit Award

Vidalakis Residence

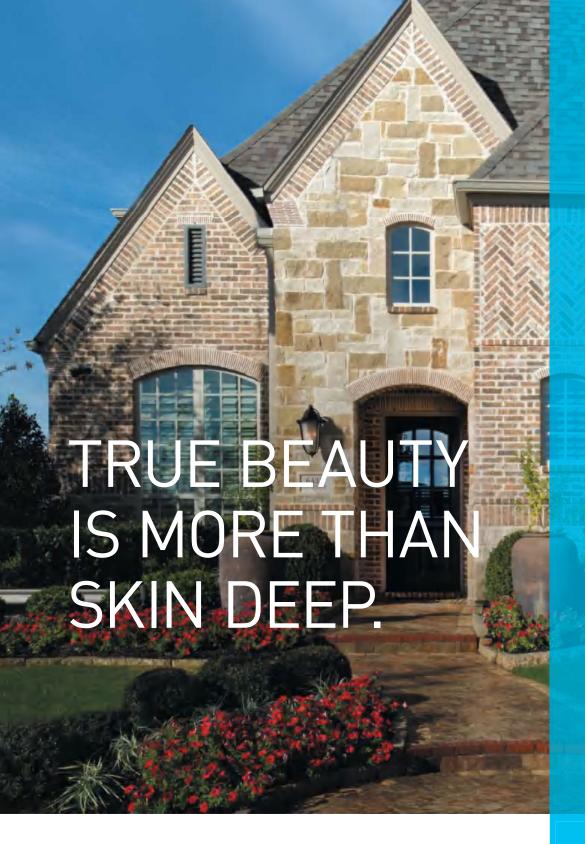
esigned for an art collector, this 7,215-square-foot house in California's Portola Valley is meant to show off more than just the architecture. Swatt | Miers Architects created a structure with three stepped stories, allowing for high ceilings and ample glazing to show of the client's collection.

One of the most breathtaking moments in the home is the circulation spin that runs the length of the southern end of the L-shaped structure, with a grand mahogany staircase that is expressed on the building's exterior. The stair overlooks a landscaped private courtyard, and operable windows allow for breezes that eliminate the need for air conditioning.

The house is flanked by other outdoor spaces, including a 75-foot-long pool with adjacent deck and lawn to the west, a more public courtyard to the north, and a glazed art studio pavilion to the east.—*K.G.*

"It's nicely done. The standout part of the house is the stair and the way that it opens up to the site and can be used for ventilation." — juror Jeffrey Day

Project Vidalakis Residence, Portola Valley, Calif.; Entrant/Architect Swatt | Miers Architects, Emeryville, Calif.; Builder Lencioni Construction Co., Redwood City, Calif.; Project Size 7,215 square feet; Site 3.7 acres; Photography Russell Abraham Photography



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Less Than 5,000 Square Feet **GRAND AWARD**

minimized work on the fragile site, as pieces easily could be assembled in place.

The minimalist expression extends to the interiors, which are painted white and sparsely furnished to help direct attention to the exterior. The three buildings have glazed corners that maximize both views from and privacy between each structure. The retreat's intimate composition provides a bit of urbanity within a landscape whose natural beauty warrants enormous respect and inspires careful contemplation, the same balance that drew Henry David Thoreau to the Maine woods more than a century and a half ago. — E.K.

"This is a great little project. It's playful and it's successful across the board. It sits nicely in the landscape as well." - juror Drew Lang



Project Little House on the Ferry, Vinalhaven, Maine; **Entrant/Architect** GO Logic, Belfast, Maine; **Builder** CW Conway & Sons, Vinalhaven; **Project Size** 682 square feet; **Site** 0.85 acre; **Photography** Trent Bell



If our approach seems random, that's because it is.



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Less Than 5,000 Square Feet Merit Award





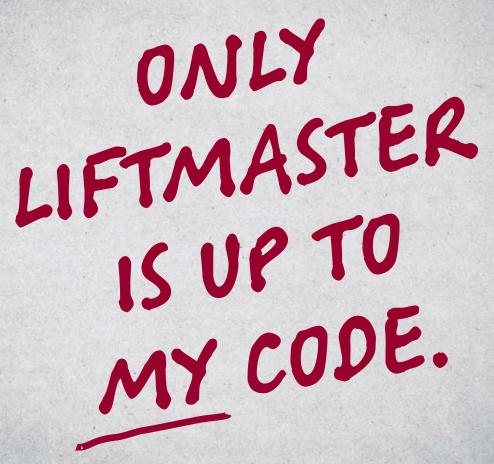


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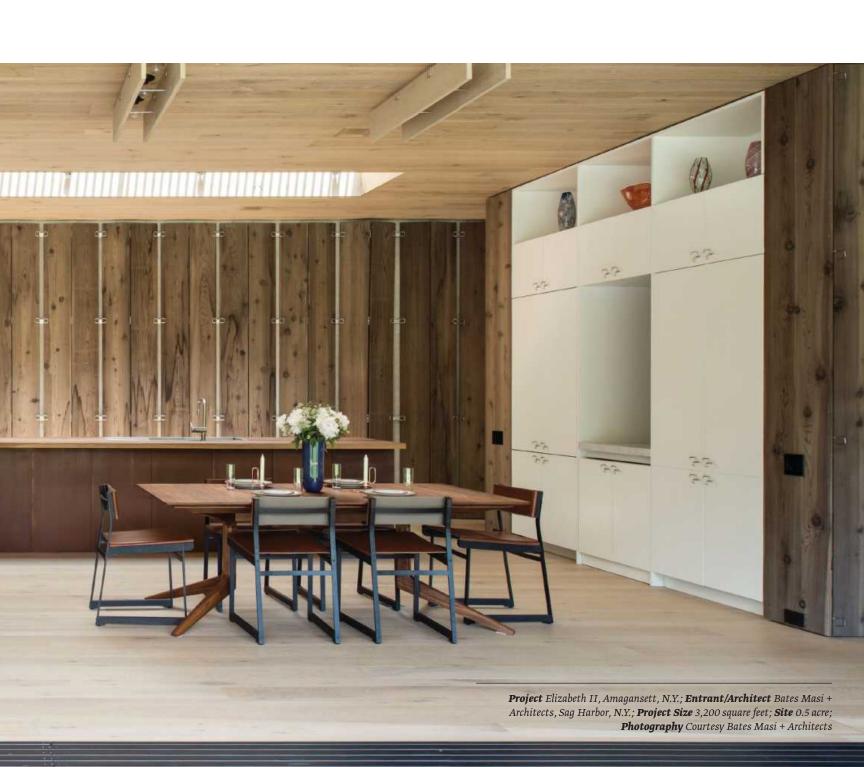


ather than fixating on the purely visual, for the design of Elizabeth II, a wooded retreat in the Hamptons resort town of Amagansett, N.Y., the team at Bates Masi + Architects explored the relationship between space and sound. Extensive research in architectural acoustics fueled a relationship among materials, details, and structure to create a house that is, essentially, a living instrument.

The structure is composed of a parallel series of cedar panels and a thick layer of concrete poured over insulated foam. The stratification diffracts approaching sound waves and casts an acoustic shadow over the home to keep its gathering spaces quiet. Custom-designed stainless steel clips attach the siding to the structure and offer flexibility against the material's natural expansion and contraction through freeze/thaw cycles. Inside, the clips double as robe hooks and cabinet pulls, allowing for further "tuning" of the boards with an adjustable spring mechanism that controls the amount of space through which the sound waves pass. The central staircase also plays along, tapering in thickness, and thus varying the pitch heard with each footfall. — L.D.

"This is a very successful project. I think it's very well designed, built, and executed. I really like the detailing of the siding." — juror Jeffrey Day







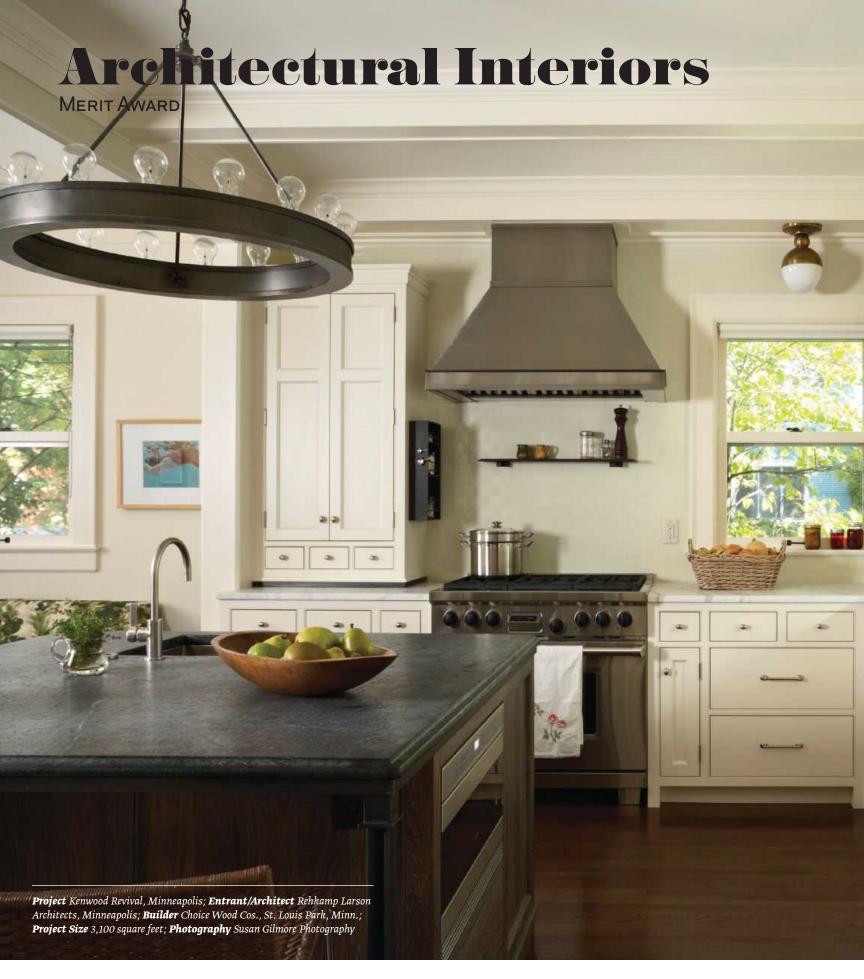






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Kenwood Revival

his 3,100-square-foot Georgian Revival home received major surgery to bring its good masonry bones up to contemporary living standards. Maintaining the gracious 1918 central stair hall and living room, the designers gutted the rest of the main floor and created a new open kitchen that connects to an enlarged dining room and wholly reimagined breakfast nook. New custom cabinets and millwork throughout the renovated spaces maintain a traditional paneled style, infused with industrial nuances. These include floor-to-ceiling glass tile walls and custom metal cabinet valances, shelves, range hood, and island legs.

The breakfast nook maintains its original footprint in the northeast corner of the home, but built-in bookshelves now offer a more formal connection to the kitchen while a bench seat lining the exterior wall gives the family of five comfortable, informal seating.

The rear of the home was reconfigured to provide a better entry sequence from the garage, along with more useful spaces. A screened porch was enlarged and, using a conservatory glazing system, now brings more sunlight into the renovated kitchen. — *E.K.*

"The transformation of the spaces was rather dramatic and beautiful. The execution of this style was well done, and the way that it integrates into the rest of the house was well-executed at all levels." — juror Ray Varela

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Skyhaus

esigned by the late architect Joseph Esherick, this mid-century home in the Pacific Heights neighborhood of San Francisco was in need of a remodel to suit the client's modern-day family needs. In keeping with the original designer's ethic of designing regional, sustainably minded homes, the team at Aidlin Darling Design reworked the interior to include a three-story garden atrium to bring the outdoors in and to connect the center of the house to natural daylight and light patterns through a generous skylight.

The main hallmark of the atrium is a sculptural wall made of carved wood slats that filters and directs light through the adjoining spaces. A glass-lined transverse bridge connects the bedroom suites on either side of the atrium on the top floor. At the base of the open space, a planter grows vines that will continue to climb the sculptural wall over time.

The material palette throughout the home includes concrete, wood, glass, and steel, all selected to help further the reach of the incoming daylight. A new lower level reconnects the main space to its rear yard, further linking the residents to the landscape. — *K.G.*

"I think overall it is a successful project, and the standout piece is the sculptural wooden screen. It's very handsome." — juror Drew Lang



Hillside Residence

his 1,000-square-foot bungalow on a hillside site was radically transformed by a sculptural 1,100-square-foot addition. The dilapidated original building was remodeled and painted in stark white to provide a strong contrast to the black-stained cypress-clad pavilion that's attached to its rear—a glass walkway in between now serves as the entrance, an explicit allusion to Marcel Breuer's 1943 Bi-Nuclear House proposal.

The renovated existing house holds private spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms. The addition has an open plan of kitchen, dining, and living spaces on the first floor, with an office and bath above. While the two structures emphasize the differences between old and new and private and public, the designers convey a sense of continuity across the two buildings by using salvaged lumber throughout both structures. -E.K.

"I like the fact that the new structure is iconic and isn't trying to replicate the existing house. It appears really well detailed." — juror Jeffrey Day





Project Hillside Residence, Austin, Texas; **Entrant/Architect**Alterstudio Architecture, Austin; **Builder** Ford Strei Builders,
Austin; **Project Size** 2,170 square feet; **Site** 0.185 acre; **Photography** Casey Dunn







he client's work hard, play hard lifestyle fueled Feldman Architecture's modern update of a 1915 San Francisco townhome that reflects the spirited nature of its inhabitants. The renovation repurposes the home's existing bones, adding an elegant cedar- and glass-paneled façade that offers little indication of the frolicsome sanctuary within. At the heart of the recrafted structure is a jutting, steel-framed staircase that connects all three levels around a central atrium. A place for cooking, eating, working, and playing, the large, light-filled space connects the adjacent spaces, and keeps the clients in easy ear-shot of their young children at all times. In the kitchen, a handmade swing carved from reclaimed oak hangs is suspended from the underside of the staircase above. Upstairs, a detached study and green roof provide an occasional oasis from the excitement below. — L.D.

"I love the central space and the way that it creates a three-story volume with the balconies and swing. It's a nice space to be in." — juror Ray Varela **Project** Fitty Wun House, San Francisco; **Entrant/Architect** Feldman Architecture, San Francisco; **Builder** Design Line Construction, San Francisco; **Project Size** 4,188 square feet; **Site** 3,125 square feet; **Photography** Joe Fletcher



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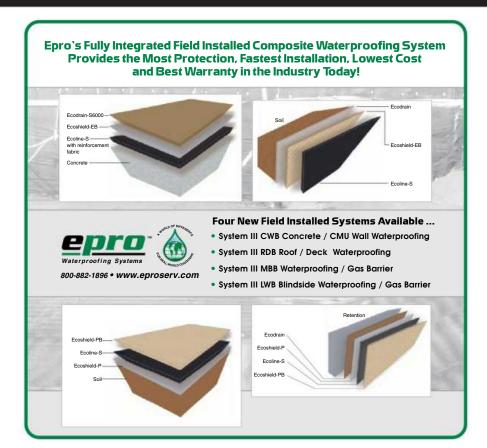


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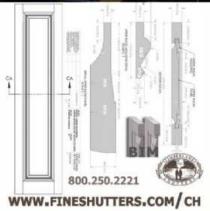
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LIMB BY LIMB

In Austin, Texas, Alterstudio Architecture carefully situated the Lake View Residence (the 2015 Custom Home of the Year, see page 20) to capitalize on the "extravagant views" of the neighboring Bright Leaf Preserve as well as the "intimate experience" of a stand of live oak trees at the front of the site, says principal Kevin Alter.

Preserving the trees (which the client was so taken with that he watered them every day during construction) meant building the porch around them. "We photographed and modeled the trees," Alter

says. "We wanted to know exactly where they were." Large openings in the porch roof were designed to prevent limb damage in storms more so than to accommodate future growth, and foundations were hand-dug in spots to preserve root structures. The openings are surrounded by a drip to limit water streaking on the white stucco ceiling plane, and are deeper than the roof edge, which was designed with a slim-profile gutter. All details are designed not for details sake, but to bring the outside, quite literally, in. — KATIE GERFEN

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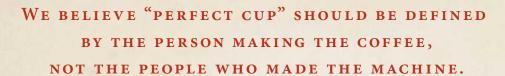
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